



IN SIGHT

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Indianapolis IN 46202

**FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND OR PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED
DOMESTIC MAIL
MANUAL 135.7**

IN SIGHT
A VIST COORDINATOR BVA-INRG NEWSLETTER FOR
BLINDED VETERANS in Indiana
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Featured in this Edition:

- **Indianapolis VIST Support Group**
- **TEE Tournament**
- **GPS & Computer Monthly Discussion Groups-Hines Chapters**
- **Veteran Spotlight-Freddie Edwards**
- **Closing Thoughts**

INDIANAPOLIS VIST SUPPORT GROUP

The Indianapolis VIST support group meets the 2nd Friday of every month from 2:00pm-3:30pm in Room A-8095 at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center, 1481 W. 10th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202. If you are a Veteran who has vision loss and would like to meet other Veterans who have vision loss, please join us for the monthly support group to share your experiences, learn from one another, and hear from speakers. Drivers and spouses are welcome too.

This group meeting is considered a hospital appointment, so if you are eligible for travel pay, let me know that you are attending and then you will be able to receive travel pay. I hope to see each of you at the upcoming support group meetings:

April 13th 2012

A Blinded Veteran who is a Pearl Harbor survivor will speak and high school students from the Indiana School for the Blind & Visually Impaired will talk with Veterans.

May 11th 2012

June 8th 2012

Please note, at the time of this publication, the speakers for May & June were not yet determined. We hope to have a speaker on gardening and another speaker to talk about the difference between an Apple and a Microsoft computer.

TEE TOURNAMENT

Training Exposure and Exercise is what you will get if you participate in this year's TEE tournament. Dates are September 10-14, 2012 in Iowa City Iowa and applications are now available. This event is for legally blind or disabled Veterans and it is 3 days of golfing and other sports including bowling, kayaking, horse shoes and bag toss. If you enjoy athletic events I hope you will consider going to this year's TEE tournament. Contact your VIST coordinator for an application.

GPS & COMPUTER MONTHLY DISCUSSION GROUPS-HINES CHAPTER (Veterans Helping Veterans)

To access the discussion, dial the 800 number listed below and when it tells you to put in access code, enter it as written below.

Computer Support Conference Call

Date:	First Thursday of every month
Time:	11:00 to 11:50 am (EDT)
Conference call in number:	1-800-767-1750
Access Code:	44125

GPS Trekker Support Conference Call

Date:	First Tuesday of every month
Time:	11:00 to 11:50 am (EDT)
Conference call in number:	1-800-767-1750
Access code:	44125

If you would like to be included in the e-mail reminders on the calls, which include agenda topics, please send an E-mail to Richard Olson at rwovernal@sbcglobal.net. Please include your name, contact information and which group you would like to be added to.

VETERAN SPOTLIGHT-FREDDIE EDWARDS

Freddie Edwards was born in Mississippi and raised in Florida. Following high school, Freddie moved to Indiana and began training to become a surgical technician. In the middle of his training in 1969, he was handed a message from a co-worker that his aunt had received a letter on his behalf from the draft board.

Knowing very little of the different military branches but aware enough to be certain that he did not wish to be drafted into the Army, Freddie walked into a Marine Corps recruiting office the following March. Three days later he was on a Boeing 707 on his way to boot camp via the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California. After completing boot camp, he was sent to Camp Pendleton, California, for basic infantry training and then on to training in his Military Occupational Specialty as an auto mechanic.

Freddie served a tour of duty in Vietnam shortly thereafter. Other duty stations included the Marine Corps Air Station in El Toro, California; Okinawa, Japan; Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; and back to the Recruit Depot in San Diego, where he was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa and honorably discharged from the Corps in 1977 as an E6 (Staff Sergeant). He then returned to Indianapolis, securing a job as supervisor of the Indianapolis Public School automotive repair center. The work included the supervision of repairs for 400 school buses, 92 trucks of various sizes and classifications, 31 staff cars, and a variety of lawn and garden equipment. In 1992, he was forced to leave the position due to the deterioration of this sight.

Finding it difficult to keep himself busy at home, Freddie welcomed a call from the Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) Coordinator at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. The contact eventually resulted in his involvement in the hospital's volunteer program as a member of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Voluntary Services (VAVS)

Committee and its executive board. He also joined the Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) and was admitted to the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center's (Hines) regular training program in 1994.

Freddie is the recipient of BVA's David L. Schnair Award (1996), the President's Volunteer Service Award, Outstanding Volunteer of the Year from the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the VAVS Dedicated Service Award. In 1997, he opened the BVA volunteer office in Indianapolis and became its first office manager. Soon thereafter he began a free coffee program and computer support group. He most recently advocated successfully for a new VIST Coordinator position at the Northern Indiana VA Medical Center in Fort Wayne and served on the panel that interviewed candidates.

Always active in his regional Blind Veterans Association group, Freddie is the current secretary and is also a past president and vice president. He also serves on the Indiana State Board of Directors for the American Council of the Blind. He is a member of the Marine Corps League, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, and the City of Indianapolis Veterans Day Council.

Freddie is now on the board of directors of the Blinded Veterans Association as District 2 Director.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Spring has sprung in Indianapolis and around Indiana. The VIST office continues to be hopping, which means busy. We had a great time in March at the bowling alley. If you missed this, we hope you can join us next year. Members of The Blinded Veterans Association and I had the opportunity to go to the Bloomington Outpatient Clinic for a tour and meet with staff. This was very beneficial. If you are an athlete or interested in golf, I hope you will consider going to the TEE tournament (see above) this year. If I may be of any assistance to you or your family please contact me.

Happy Spring!

Deanna Austin, VIST Coordinator.

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